

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

HA-05 AID-05 /076 W

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R 300748Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0977

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 3872

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, SN

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

1. DURING MY FIRST CALL ON DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER GOH KENG SWEE AUGUST 18, HE MADE SOME COMMENTS ON INDOCHINA WHICH PERHAPS SHEDS SOME ADDITIONAL LIGHT ON HOW THE GOS SEES DEVELOPMENTS THERE.

2. GOH BELIEVES THAT THE THAI AND MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENTS ARE COPING REASONABLY WELL WITH THEIR PARALLEL PROBLEMS OF COMMUNIST INSURGENCIES AND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ATTRACT A FAIR MEASURE OF POPULAR SUPPORT IN THEIR EFFORTS. HE SAID THAT ANY VERY VISIBLE OUTSIDE INTERVENTION IN SUPPORT OF THESE EFFORTS WOULD BE FOOLISH AND WOULD NOT HELP THE SITUATION. IN HIS WORDS, "IT IS GOOD FOR THEM TO MAINTAIN STRONG SELF RELIANCE." HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT "VISIBLE" AMERICAN SUPPORT SIMPLY ENCOURAGES INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT THROUGH CRIES OF INTERVENTION.

3. ON KAMPUCHEA, GOH MENTIONED A MANIFESTO BY POL POT OR
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IENG SARY WHICH HE SAYS SPELLED OUT IN DETAIL THE RATIONALE FOR THE BRUTAL POLICY THEY ARE NOW PURSUING; I.E., THE EXTERMINATION OF THE EDUCATED CLASSES, DISPERSAL OF URBAN PEOPLES, AND RETURN TO A PEASANT POPULATION ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE CREATION OF A PURE SOCIALIST COUNTRY. (WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY THIS MANIFESTO). ECHOING A COMMENT FREQUENTLY MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER, GOH SAID THAT IT IS

WISE TO TAKE COMMUNIST LEADERS AT THEIR WORD.

4. ALSO, I COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTE AFP REPORT FROM BANGKOK THAT APPEARED IN THE AUGUST 29 STRAITS TIMES WHICH DESCRIBES ADVANCES OF PRO-VIETNAMESE KAMPUCHEAN REBEL FORCES, AND REPORTS "MILITARY OBSERVERS" AS PREDICTING THE COLLAPSE OF THE KAMPUCHEAN GOVERNMENT. SHOULD THIS HAPPEN, IT WOULD POSE A SERIOUS AND IMMEDIATE POLICY DILEMMA FOR CHINA. THIS OBSERVATION IS MADE IN RECOGNITION OF THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS THAT PRESENTLY EXIST WITH VIETNAM, AND THE FACT THAT IT CANNOT AFFORD THE TOTAL DEFEAT OF ITS ONLY INDOCHINESE ALLY.

5. ON VIETNAM, GOH SAID THAT HE BELIEVES THAT THE SRV ACTIONS WHICH HAVE LED TO THE EXODUS OF CHINESE ARE DIRECTED AGAINST THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CLASS, NOT AGAINST THE CHINESE AS A RACE. COMMENT: WE HAD EARLIER HEARD THIS INTERPRETATION FROM AN MFA OFFICIAL. IT ACCORDS, INCIDENTALLY, WITH THAT OF SOME OF THE REFUGEES INTERVIEWED RECENTLY BY EMBASSY BANGKOK. GOH SIMPLY CONCLUDED THAT THIS IS A "NATURAL" STEP PARTICULARLY IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM.
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